

Representing

80,000

Australian

Aborigines

The Australian ABO CALL

THE VOICE OF THE ABORIGINES

EDITED BY J. T. PATTEN

We ask for
Education,
Opportunity,
and
Full Citizen
Rights

No. 5.

MONTHLY, 3d.

AUGUST, 1938.

What is our Fate? PARLIAMENT PROMISES NEW ACT

Aborigines of New South Wales are anxiously awaiting the New Aborigines Act promised for the present session of Parliament.

What will be our fate? Mr. Bruxner has promised "a New Deal". How will they shuffle the cards?

We do not want anthropologists, clergymen, and police to "exterminate" us, as during 150 years past.

The following article describes actual conditions in a New South Wales township at the present time.

THE COLOUR BAR AT COLLARENEBRI

by a Traveller

Collarenebri, on the banks of the Barwon River, is noted for what is called "The Blacks' Cemetery", a collection of graves adorned with broken glass and other ornaments.

As a visitor to Collarenebri, I went to see this place. One mile out of town I stopped at the Blacks' Camp, which is a group of humpies made of flattened kerosene tins and boughs.

What I saw at the Blacks' Camp was so interesting that I did not go on immediately to see the Cemetery. I am much more interested in living Aborigines than in dead Aborigines.

Noticing a number of children peeping shyly around the humpies, I asked whether they went to school, and was told "No, there is a colour-bar in Collarenebri!"

Further enquiries revealed that there are more than twenty children of school age, living in the Blacks' Camp, one mile from the public school at Collarenebri; but none of these children dare present themselves at the public school to ask for education.

Classed as "Niggers"

Many of these children are half-castes, or quarter-castes. Almost all have "whitemen's blood" in their veins, and are the children or grandchildren of white men.

I saw two little girls with red hair, and three children with flaxen-white hair. It would be impossible at first glance to tell the difference between some of these children and the sunburned white children of the town.

But the parents dare not send them to the Public School, because they are classed as "niggers", and would be tormented by the other children. Also, there would be "reprisals" by the white citizens of Collarenebri, if the blacks dared to send their children to the public school.

As the blacks are dependent on the Whites for the right to work (at cheap rates) they do not wish to incur the hatred of the white men.

So they keep their kiddies at home, away from school.

Here are the names of the children of school age, who are growing up, without education, one mile from the public school at Collarenebri:

Colin Thorne's family: Jessie, Edward, Rene, Cecil, Dulcie, Eric.

Kennedy's family: Alfred, William, Edna, Grace.

Wetherell's family: Rose, Roberts, Rene.

Flick's family: Lindsay, Joe, Isobel.

Les. Combo's family: Shirley, David.

Gus. Combo's family: Rona, Cyril.

Mundy's family: Hazel, Leila.

Croaker's family: Cecil, Alan.

The above is a list of twenty-four children, ages between five and fourteen years, at present without schooling at Collarenebri.

The parents of these children find employment in Collarenebri and district, the men mostly engaged in bush work and some of the women doing laundry work for the people of the town.

These people are almost all born at Collarenebri, and they do not wish to leave the vicinity where they are known and can get employment.

Police officers and others have advised the Aborigines to leave Collarenebri and go with their families to Brewarrina or Pilliga Government Reserves, so that the children may be educated at Aboriginal Schools.

The parents say they are terrified of the Government Reserves, because their children would be "apprenticed out" to white employers, and perhaps the parents would never see them thereafter.

Also, the atmosphere of the Government Reserve would be demoralising to the parents themselves, as they do not wish to live as parasites, drawing Government rations, herded with strangers from other districts.

Serious complaints are made by the Aborigines of Collarenebri regarding official intimidation used by Government representatives in an attempt to force these eight families to remove to a Government Station.

Intimidation

It is alleged that police officers have peremptorily ordered an Aboriginal mother to remove herself and children to a Government Reserve, and have threatened that, in the alternative, the children will be forcibly removed.

The police intimidation consists in alleging that the mother is immoral and that the children are not properly cared for by her.

The husband of this woman is a good type of bush-worker, who is in almost constant employment.

Very few of the Aborigines at Collarenebri draw Government rations or dole, and the Aborigines Protection Board appears to take little or no interest in the welfare of these people.

The obvious need is for the children to be permitted, or compelled, to attend the Public School, but, as their education has hitherto been neglected, the Government could perhaps send a temporary teacher, specially for the coloured children, to work in a "provisional" school until the children gained sufficient confidence to be able to attend the public school.



Aboriginal Children at Collarenebri, July, 1938.

The above picture, taken at Collarenebri, N.S.W., in July, 1938, shows a group of Aboriginal children who are debarred from attending the Collarenebri Public School. They are growing up without education on the outskirts of the town. The parents of these children are self-supporting, and have reared the children healthily, as can be seen from the photograph. Why are these children debarred from school?

It would also seem necessary for the citizens of Collarenebri to learn to be more decent and humane in their attitude to the Aborigines.

It is stated by the blacks that there is a special ward for Aborigines at the local hospital, and also that Aboriginal men, women and girls would not dare to attend a dance in Collarenebri.

The joke is, according to the Aborigines, that many of the so-called "white" citizens of Collarenebri have Aboriginal grandmothers or great-grandmothers, but are not proud of the Aboriginal heritage, as they should be!

Colour Prejudice

Other white men, who pretend to "look down" on the blacks, have attempted to seduce Aboriginal women; and others again do not hesitate to employ Aborigines, both male and female, at far less than "award" wages.

The "Abo Call" calls upon Mr. Yeo, member of parliament for this district, to protect the Aboriginal families of Collarenebri from the persecution to which they are subjected.

We call upon Mr. Drummond, Minister for Education, to do his duty and provide education, "Compulsory, secular, and free", for the twenty-four children, named in this article, most of whom are the children or grand-children of white men.

We call upon Mr. Gollan, Chief Secretary, to instruct his police officers to cease intimidation of Aborigines in Collarenebri.

We call upon Mr. Hawkins, Minister for Social Services, to send an officer to look into the social welfare of the coloured human beings of this town and district.

We call upon Mr. Lang, as "Labour" leader, to secure award conditions for these dark people.

We call upon all decent white people of New South Wales to open their eyes to the "British atrocities" which are occurring in our own community at the present time.

Even in death, the colour-bar is drawn at Collarenebri.

The blacks have a cemetery of their own, out in the bush, the nameless graves covered with broken glass bottles...

QUEENSLAND

Royal Commission Needed

The Aborigines in Queensland are joining their black brothers and sisters in N.S.W. and Victoria in protesting against the treatment under which they are forced to live by law. We, the remnants of our race, are appealing to the White Community of Australia, to force their Governments to alter their laws against us and to treat us as normal human beings. We are willing to forget the acts of injustice meted out to Aboriginal men, women and children in the past. Our treatment by the Whites has been and still is a blot upon the fair name of Australia throughout the civilised world and prevents Australians earning good reputation abroad.

The Queensland Aborigines who are forced to the Cherbourg Aboriginal Mission Station in Queensland are kept in a condition of semi-starvation, and so are mentally and physically depressed into a state which robs them of all ability and initiative. The whole atmosphere of the place is made depressing for such Aborigines so that their very desire for survival is reduced almost to vanishing point. And the system under which they suffer is called Protective! The whole system is a humbug and a swindle.

The Queensland Government holds £250,000 in trust for Aborigines whose accumulated savings from earnings have reached that amount, but which the Government withholds from them! Is this not a governmental humbug and swindle? Of course it is! Gross and palpable, but thousands of Whites know of it and condone it.

In effect, Australia's Blacks are being slowly starved to death — mentally and physically — by restrictive legislation intended to exterminate them. The mean injustice of the discriminating laws against the Aborigines of Australia should have a royal commission to thoroughly investigate and report upon. The whole trouble bases on the fact that the Blacks are under laws, called "protective", which operate in their disfavour, whether intended to or not.

J. T. PATTEN.

IS THIS SLAVERY?

CHALLENGE BY A GULF SQUATTER
QUEENSLAND MINISTER'S STATEMENT

We have received from Mr. R. M. Watson, of Gregory Downs, Burketown, North Queensland, the following three items for *The Abo Call*:—

The first item is from the Melbourne *Argus* of 12th January last —

QUEENSLAND AND ABORIGINES Minister's Views.

Brisbane, Tuesday.
If the Commonwealth can show that it will care for Australian Aborigines better than Queensland has done the State will hand over control without demur.

This is the attitude of the Queensland Government, according to the Minister for Home Affairs (Mr. Hanlon) who has taken a personal interest in the Aborigines, and has twice visited their far northern reserves.

"We are not concerned with the dignity of officials or the advancement of anthropologists," he said, in discussing a report from Melbourne that the Commonwealth Government soon would call a conference of Federal and State Ministers to discuss the future of Australia's Aborigines. "The very best must be done for this diminishing native race and its welfare will be the paramount consideration of the Queensland Government."

Queensland was doing more for Aborigines than any other Government, Mr. Hanlon added.

The second item is a letter sent to the editor of the *Argus* in reply to the first item, but which the editor did not publish—

In the "Argus" of the 12th January an article appears entitled, "Queensland and Aborigines — Minister's Views", in which it is stated, by Mr. Hanlon, that the Queensland Government is doing more for Aborigines than any other Government. Well, my experience of over 40 years in the north of Queensland, where we still employ some Abos., is that the Queensland Government treats them in a very unfair and cruel manner; for, in the first place, the Government takes two-thirds of the Abos.' wages and says that the amounts are put to the credit of the individual Abos; but till the

last three years the Abos. got nothing of this money; so that they were robbed of many thousands of pounds. There are, to my knowledge, records of Abos. dying worth thousands of pounds each, yet the wives and children of same could not get a penny, and so had to be supported by their previous employers. In one such case, I was asked if these Abos. were legally married: I answered that the Abos.' marriage law was as binding as the white people's. At another time I was informed by the Chief Protector of Abos., when I put in a claim on behalf of the wife and family of an Abo. who had worked 35 years for me, for some of the money that was nominally held by the dead man — over one thousand pounds of his wages — that he, the Chief Protector, had no record of the Abo., notwithstanding that the "local protector" (a constable) held an enquiry at his death and also buried him, and had sent the papers to the Protector for the district.

Another terrible injustice to the Abos. is allowing the local protector (a policeman) to arrest Abos., from any part of Queensland, and have them deported to Palm Island; especially when they have committed no depredation whatever, but out of spite to an employer.

The Chief Protector maintains that the Abos. like being sent to the Island, whereas it is quite the reverse, as can be seen when grown men and women come to their employers crying like children and asking to be kept from going. Also, Abos. have been found dead, clinging to floating tree branches; in trying to get back to their own country. A local protector can make an Aboriginal woman or man do anything by threatening to send them to the Island.—A Queenslander.

The third item is a note dated 29th July, 1938, by "Carpentaria" —

"A local policeman in the back country is a protector of Abos. Well, he can do what he likes with Abo. girls and men in the way of signing them on to an employer, no matter if the Abo. objects to go with such a White. Is this slavery, and would any court in England say this was law?"

Northern Territory

ADMINISTRATOR BELIEVES IN LASH FOR ABORIGINES

According to the Melbourne *Herald* of 8th June, 1938, Mr. R. H. Waddell, a former Administrator for the Northern Territory, believes in flogging as a deterrent of crime. Commenting on a recent statement by Judge Wells at Darwin that flogging might be more suitable for natives than imprisonment, Mr. Waddell said his 7 years as administrator had convinced him that flogging, if possible in front of the tribe, was the most impressive way of interpreting the white man's law to the Aborigines.

NORTHERN TERRITORY PROTECTION.

The following is an extract from "The Northern Standard", of Darwin, Friday, 20th May, 1938:

Dios Davey, a halfcaste, was sentenced to two months imprisonment with hard labour when he pleaded guilty to having insufficient lawful means of support. The Police Prosecutor (Sergt. R. R. Bridgland) said Davey had taken some goods from an old man's camp at the 2½ Mile. When arrested he admitted he had taken the food. He said he had no swag, or provisions, and owned nothing but the clothes he stood in. Davey was a nomad and roamed the bush alone. On one occasion he was found weak and helpless, and admitted he had lived on snakes and goannas.

HALFCASTES IN NORTH

The following is from an article contributed to the "Northern Standard", Darwin, 7th June, 1938:

While discussion has been going on what to do with our aboriginals, there is a far greater problem looming up: that is the halfcaste and his progeny. The aboriginal will, in the course of time, be non-existent. The halfcaste is the reverse, and is increasing rapidly. They are being reared and educated under the same standards as the white children born in the North. What is going to happen when they leave school and go out on to the labour market? In the southern States they were bred out by intermarrying with the whites, but the north is a totally different proposition. Here we have the Asiatic strain which predominates, and the offspring marry back into that strain (East is East and West is West, etc.). This is something for politicians, religious bodies and reformers to study. Not being a disciple of Euclid, it is beyond me.

CITIZEN RIGHTS

The Minister for the Interior, Mr. McEwan, and other Commonwealth Ministers, have recently visited Central and North Australia.

Citizen Rights have been promised for "some" Aborigines.

Why not for all?

The Last of His Tribe

by HENRY KENDALL

Henry Kendall, whose poems are probably the most-known of all such written by an Australian-born, was born at Ulladulla, on the south coast of New South Wales, in 1841, and he died in Sydney forty-one years later, and was buried at Waverley cemetery, where there is a memorial column on his grave, which is a shrine for literary pilgrims.

THE LAST OF HIS TRIBE.

He crouches, and buries his face on his knees,
And hides in the dark of his hair;
For he cannot look up to the storm-smitten trees,
Or think of the loneliness there —
Of the loss and the loneliness there.

The wallaroos grope through the tufts of the grass,
And turn to their coverts for fear;
But he sits in the ashes and lets them pass
Where the boomerangs sleep with the spear —
With the nullah, the sling and the spear.

Uloola, behold him! The thunder that breaks
On the tops of the rocks with the rain,
And the wind which drives up with the salt of the lakes,
Have made him a hunter again —
A hunter and fisher again.

For his eyes have been full with a smouldering thought;
But he dreams of the hunts of yore,
And of foes that he sought, and of fights that he fought
With those who will battle no more —
Who will go to the battle no more.

It is well that the water which tumbles and fills
Goes moaning and moaning along;
For an echo rolls out from the sides of the hills,
And he starts at a wonderful song —
At the sound of a wonderful song.

And he sees, through the rents of the scattering fogs,
The corroboree warlike and grim,
And the lulra who sat by the fire on the logs,
To watch, like a mourner, for him —
Like a mother and mourner for him.

Will he go in his sleep from these desolate lands,
Like a chief, to the rest of his race,
With the honey-voiced woman who beckons and stands,
And gleams like a dream in his face —
Like a marvellous dream in his face?

Aborigines Progressive Association

NEWS AND NOTES.

The Executive Committee has been carefully watching developments regarding proposed new legislation in New South Wales. We are not skilful "lobbyists", like the anthropologists and missionaries who are pestering Members of Parliament, but we have done our best, through "The Abo Call" and otherwise to place the point of view of the Aborigines themselves before members of all parties.

Splendid reports have been received from Singleton, Walgett, Collarenebri, Mungindi, and Moree, regarding the interest of Aborigines in "The Abo Call" and in the work of our Association. Our people are scattered all over the place, and we cannot easily reach them, hampered as we are for funds to carry on our organising work; but we have definite proof that "The Abo Call" is travelling far and wide, bringing our message of hope and emancipation to the dark people.

Aborigines at Tuncester (N.S.W.) complain that attempts have been made to intimidate the Aborigines into leaving the Tuncester Reserve in order to force them on to another Reserve. This matter was promptly brought by the Association before the notice of Mr. Pettit (Secretary, A.P. Board), and also before Cabinet Ministers and members of Parliament.

Pending new legislation, we advise all Aborigines to resist intimidation, by police, managers, or inspectors of the A.P. Board, and to refuse to be "bluffed" into moving away from their present homes to Government Reserves. When the new Act becomes law, we shall study its provisions and advise Aborigines of their position.

News from Taree (N.S.W.) is that Aborigines there have refused to do "work for rations", as they consider that no Official has the legal right to withhold rations or impose conditions on the issue of same, as every Aboriginal, unable to secure employment, is entitled to rations while unemployed. Our people are willing to work for wages; but not for rations.

Join the Aborigines Progressive Association today, and help in the great fight for emancipation of our people by our own efforts. No white person can become a member of our Association, which is controlled by Aborigines only. There are no missionaries or anthropologists in our Association, and we do not support any political party. We stand for Aborigines progress and self-help. Join the Association today. Members' 2/- per annum. Apply to Aborigines Progressive Association, 209a Elizabeth Street, Sydney

NEW MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Mr. P. Mosley, Kempsey, N.S.W.; Mrs. R. Mosley, Kempsey, N.S.W.; Mr. F. Langlo, Kilkivan, Queensland; Mrs. N. Langlo, Kilkivan, Queensland; Miss N. Layton, Sydney, N.S.W.; Miss I. Sandy, Beaudesert, Queensland.

Read . . .

"THE ABO CALL"

The Voice of the Aborigines themselves

2/- per dozen.

from the publishers

209a Elizabeth Street, Sydney.

What Chance ?

What chance have the Australian Aborigines of surviving in Australia as a distinct race of human beings?

By the laws of New South Wales, for instance, anybody with any proportion of Aboriginal blood comes within the definition of Aboriginal, and under those laws they are subject to discriminatory political, social and economic disadvantages intended to bring about their ultimate extermination.

Probably no meaner treatment of a subject race is in operation in the world today than is that practised by the White against the Black Australians. By no section of the White community are the blacks, or their white or any other coloured admixtures, treated humanely in Australia; they are always treated as inferior human beings, out of prejudice and ignorance and a perverted "morality".

The "curse" of the British criminals — and worse, the "curse" of the brutal convict system of the British — under which White Australia was founded — is still upon us White Australians: from the first it spread a brutalising influence upon the whole of Australian human life, and from the first the Aborigines were, for by far the greater part, treated brutally: nothing whatever which the Blacks have done, in retaliation or defence, has reached nearly to the degree of brutality of the common practices of the Whites against them.

The whole spirit of the Whites against the Blacks in Australia has been degraded and degrading. There has never been a White Australian community-consciousness that it has treated the Blacks brutally and stupidly. Such individuals, or even sections, of the White Community, who have made sincere efforts to ameliorate the bad conditions which the coming of the Whites inflicted on the Blacks, have been utterly unable to make any real progress against the influence of the apathy, callousness and hostility of the White community as a whole. In spite of the Whites needing increase of population for their own self-protection, and for a progressive and full development of Australia, they have always acted in such a way as to reduce the Black population. It has been with the Whites as if they had a feeling — of which they have not been clearly conscious — that, at least in some ways, the Blacks are superior to the Whites themselves, and

that under civilising influences the Blacks in Australia were more likely than not to out-survive the Whites, unless the Whites exterminated them. The general White fear of the Yellow, Brown and Black is a manifest weakness of the Whites, and therefore weakens the effect of their civilisation, with themselves as well as with the others.

The British Whites forced their civilisation upon the Australian Blacks by the might of gunpowder: it was a true conquest by superiority of arms. The Australian Blacks had no chance then: what chance have they now? — with more than six-and-a-half million Whites against their own eighty thousand! — with a smaller minority than one in eighty! There is no crime, no matter how brutal, that the Blacks could commit against the Whites that the Whites have not committed against the Blacks. What can the Aborigines Progressive Association do to advance their cause? To put any trust whatever in the Australian Whites would be sheer blind weakness. The Aborigines must contest their cause for themselves — fight it to their limit of capacity.

For a hundred years and more the Missionaries have claimed to be sending the souls of dead Aborigines to Heaven, but the truth of the claim has never had confirmation from even one soul: but proof that the number of living bodies has reduced is easily procurable.

The anthropologists treat the Aborigines as human specimens, and make pretence of value for the results of their own investigations — scientific bluff, for they know no more of the Blacks than they do of their own Whites. Their professions and claims are made to ignorance.

And when have Australian governments ever done anything for the Blacks? The politicians have been White Australian enough to know the desire of their own kind for the extermination of the Blacks, and, claiming to be democratic, have done what they thought best to ensure extermination, for they themselves have desired it too.

But now the Blacks may find some final consolation in the fact that the White Australians are themselves in biological decline because of their inherent weaknesses and faults, of which the Blacks have been the victims for one hundred and fifty years.

H.K.W., VAUCLUSE.

DEPUTATION TO Mr. LANG

The Aborigines Progressive Association was courteously received by the Leader of the Opposition in the N.S.W. Parliament (Mr. J. T. Lang) when the Executive Committee of the Association waited on him as a deputation, on 28th July.

Letters had also been sent to the Premier (Mr. Stevens) and to the Leader of the Country Party (Mr. Bruxner), asking for an interview, but these gentlemen were not able to spare the time to see us.

Mr. Lang carefully listened to our appeal, and asked many sympathetic questions, concerning the plight of our people. He promised to watch our interests when the proposed new legislation comes before Parliament.

An immediate result of the deputation has been the following two questions asked by Mr. Lang in the House, on the 3rd and 5th August:

MR. LANG: Is the Colonial Secretary aware that because some of the Aborigines on the reserve at Peak Hill refused to accept meat they said was unfit for human consumption, the Manager has stopped their rations altogether? Will the Minister have inquiries made with a view to having the position rectified?

MR. GOLLAN: I am not acquainted with the matter mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, but I will have it investigated.

MR. LANG: Will the Colonial Secretary inquire whether instructions have been given for Aboriginal children to be removed from Collarenebri to Brewarrina? If so, will he direct that the matter be reconsidered?

MR. GOLLAN: I will have inquiries made in the direction indicated by the Hon. member.

A Cry of Anguish

FROM AN ABORIGINAL MOTHER

We have received the following letter from an Aboriginal mother, who lives on a Government Reserve in Queensland:

"My child took sick on Monday morning, 30th May, so I took him on Tuesday morning, 31st May to hospital. He was given a dose of castor oil, and sent back home to me, the same day.

"That night at 1 a.m. he took a bad turn, so I rushed him to hospital, where he was given liquorice powder and once again sent home, refused admission.

"On Wednesday morning, 1st June, the child was in a terrible condition, and was groaning with terrible pains, so I took him again to the hospital.

"I had to wait two hours before the Matron would see me, and then he was admitted to the hospital and put to bed.

"They did not try to comfort the child in any way. He was not given a hot-water bottle to keep him warm. Anyone could see that this child had double pneumonia.

"I waited on the veranda to ask for permission to sit beside my sick child, as my instinct told me it would be the last time I would see my child.

"The matron refused this permission, so I then went home.

"That night I was called at 1 a.m. and told he had passed away.

"I went to the hospital and asked the night wardman what time he really did pass away; but the wardman could not tell me, as no-one was at my child's bedside when he died."



The Aborigines Progressive Association
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 1938.

Front Row: T. Foster (Treas.), J. T. Patten (Pres.), W. G. Sherritt (Sec.).
Back Row: R. McKenzie, C. Charters, J. Timbrey, Sr. (Committeemen).
(W. Sims unavoidably absent)

AUSTRALIA'S DARK BACKGROUND

Almost every Australian country town and township has a dark background, or black fringe, of bush slums, in which the descendants of the original Australians shyly live.

There are 10,000 Aborigines in New South Wales, of whom 9,000 are classed as half-castes; and these people know and feel that they are in a minority, belonging to a despised race.

They are not allowed to enter public-houses for a drink, which is the great pastime of the white Lords and Masters.

They are not allowed to attend dances, except perhaps as shrinking spectators, peering in at the doors at the happy white people enjoying themselves.

At the cinema shows, they are put in a special paddock, right up against the screen.

Often their children are debarred from attending the public schools.

Drunken white men come leering after the wives and daughters of the Dark Australians, and do not respect any females of the dark race, however respectable these may be.

Police bully the dark people, clergymen preach at them, anthropologists attempt to "study" them.

What is the great crime of our people, that we should be treated in such a cowardly fashion by the overwhelming numbers of the white men?

Our people are good workers, honest, eager to please. Without the aid of the dark people, Australia could never have been opened up and pioneered by the whites. Our people were anxious to help the whitemen, and to learn the new ways of civilisation.

Yet today, 150 years after the first settlement of Australia by whitemen, our people are still worse off than are the beasts of the field, who are at least cared for by their white owners.

This is Australia's dark background, the black smudge on the fair name of Australia.

Not until White Australians learn to behave decently towards the dark Australians will this Commonwealth be able to boast that it is a civilised community.

P. DEGILBO.

THE GOVERNMENT'S CALLOUS TREATMENT OF THE ABORIGINES

The laws that are operated by the Aborigines' Protection Board are the most callous and unjust that could be imposed upon any primitive race. The Government looks after Aborigines so well that at last the latter have formed an Association to fight these laws which are today "protecting" Australian Aborigines. We have only to look at the past history of Tasmania, to see how the government there protected the blacks of that state, so thoroughly that they were exterminated. There is not today one living Tasmanian Aboriginal. Is this what our N.S.W. Government is intending through the operation of its A.P. Board?

Ever since the Government and its Board started "protecting" the Aborig-

ines there has been nothing but misery, poverty and bloodshed. Why should the Government keep on with bullying tactics — forcing these people to live in misery and sorrow? For 150 years these cruel laws pertaining to the Aborigines have been in force. Is it not time these laws were rescinded and new laws enacted giving full citizen rights to all Aborigines?

If the Government wants to ultimately exterminate these people, as it has been slowly doing through all these years, why do they not do the job properly, as they did in the early days of this country's history? — Give licences to the white people to shoot them down!

If the A.P. Board really desired to assist the Aborigines, its actions would be moulded to a far different pattern to that which they are using today.

BELONG

by Ian Mudie

They're trying to convince you you don't belong
where the wireless drowns your corroboree song;
they're trying to kick you out of the city;
they talk of your whole dark race as "a pity".

They seem to forget that it all is yours
as long as their "home" land drags and draws,
that while old Europe is the whole of their song
— dammit, Jacky, they don't belong!

Damn it, Jacky, you know it too!
The whole damn country belongs to you.
They've never belonged for even a day,
for Europe is only a dream away.

Damn it, Jacky, it's not Adelaide
— it's Europe, that's the way they're made.
They see it all as gothic spires,
they never notice your signal fires

that leap and curl a wreath of smoke
from one black bloke to the next black bloke,
signalling far across the range
"I met an Australian, just for a change!"

CAPRICORNIA

TOCKY'S ESCAPE, AND LONG WALK HOME.

Tocky is the tragic heroine of Xavier Herbert's great novel "Capricornia" — the "black-velvet" novel of the Australian Northern Territory. One of the several great episodes of her life is her escape from the Aboriginal Compound at Port Zodiac and her long walk by the railway track to her home at Red Ochre (cattle station).

Having (technically) murdered a man — unbeknown to anybody but herself — she thought she had been incarcerated in the Compound pending a charge of murder, but this was not so in fact.

The extract below is from Chapter Thirty-two, and commences on page 530.

Tocky continued to wash for the matron, but instead of sleeping with the hundred bastards in the Halfcastes Home was locked up at night in the maternity section of the Compound. She remained at the Compound for two full months, occupied mainly with laundry-work and with pondering over the change in her body and with brooding on lurking fears. As no-one had told her why she was confined, she believed it was on account of her crime and supposed that she would be executed some day. By questioning comrades she convinced herself that they knew little about her crime. That seemed natural enough. They knew little about anything but poverty and humiliation. However, she had not found the matron so ignorant. One day while ironing in that lady's presence she made bold to ask whether they were going to kill her. The lady engrossed in her own thoughts at first, then alarmed for the safety of her clothing, replied sharply, "It wouldn't be much loss if they did — Ow! And I'll kill you too if you burn those things — you little fool — watch what you're doing!"

To Tocky's mind the conditions of her imprisonment were at variance with those of the condemned murderers of Norman's tales only in two respects, that she was not restrained with stones and bars and certainly not well fed. The advantage to be taken of the lack of bars occurred to her one Saturday afternoon while the attention of the white superintendents was concentrated on a game of bridge and that of the humbler residents on a rowdy game of football. She left her prison forthwith.

She ran to the beach and into the water, and after assuring herself that she had not been seen, walked to the rocks of Fathead Point, keeping to the water all the way for fear of leaving tracks for traitors. At the Point she was forced by the depth of the water to come ashore, and forced to struggle for half a mile or more over and under and between and around huge rocks that looked as though they had been flung there in some gigantic battle between the wrathful gods of old. Wrath of the Gods! Poor midget pregnant semi-savage Tocky knew nothing of the gods of old, nor knowing would have thought of such small fry, being as she was engrossed in the seemingly impossible task of escaping from the Masters of Mankind.

At last she reached Mailunga Beach, but for over an hour was denied the long-awaited joy of steeping bleeding feet in silky sands by a crowd of people lounging in the grove of coconuts beyond the little creek she first must cross. It was a crowd of whites, mostly children, a picnic of the Sunday-school she guessed at once, recognising the silk-clad figure of a rotund red-faced man as that of the Rev. Finchley Randter, who sometimes came to the Compound to teach his gospel of humility.

Sunday-school picnic! Cakes and fruit and lollies and sweet drinks galore. Although Tocky had never taken part in a Sunday-school picnic, the Rev. Mr. Randter never having introduced that part of his ritual into the Compound, she knew all there was to know about such functions, having spent many a stolen afternoon with coloured comrades watching the rich ones from the scrub and waiting to pounce on their leavings. The knowledge made confinement to the rocks less irksome. She settled herself, and smirking in anticipation of the feast that would be hers if she beat the ants to the leavings, watched Mr. Randter beating time while his food-proud flock sang an

invitation to Almighty God to join them in their feasting.

The shadows of the coconuts crept far, gold came flowing from the harbour up the creek; the Christians, having packed their bellies full and sung thanksgiving unto Him who dealt so well with them, packed up their bags and went off laughing.

Tocky came out of the rocks, plunged into the golden creek, ran up the silky beach. There were scraps galore, delicious scraps, corned-beef sandwiches with mustard and pastry with cream, a little gritty with sand, perhaps, but not anty with ants as they should have been but for the Great Bunyip's good sense in sending ants home at sundown. She wrapped up some of the leavings in a piece of paper, and munching went her way through the coconut-grove towards the Meatworks.

It was dark when she reached the Tikka Point road. She followed the road that left it for the 2-Mile where most of the railway-workers lived. She passed through the settlement of 2-Mile like a wraith, unseen but seeing all, watching verandas and lighted windows, listening to the clatter of dishes and the clack of tongues. Some little distance past the last house she dived into the scrub, climbed the railway-embankment, continued on her way down the road of still-warm steel.

She walked for hours in the easy-going native style, with body loose and drooping forward, hands clasped behind the back, heels raised, toes turned in, the converse of the whiteman's style, but no less effective as an easy mode of going far and fast for all that. The sleepers, buried to the tops in gravel and overgrown with couch, were good to tread on after rutty stony roads, and more, were spaced as though to suit her paces. Little paces. About three thousand to the mile, three-quarters of a million to the journey. Not that Tocky calculated so. She knew Red Ochre was a hundred miles away, but realised what distance was no more than most folks do. She was, however, not afraid of distance as most folks are. She would have walked to Batman had it suited her; even though she knew she might be occupied in travelling unto the third and fourth generation.

The waning moon peeped over the bush, saw that the coast was clear, and slowly climbed the sky. A silver road for Tocky now. On she went, and on and on, till her feet began to miss the sleepers, tangle in the grass, stub toes on bolts of fish-plates, stagger off the road. One silver creek she crossed, and another, all singing sirens' songs to tired feet. At length the feet succumbed, defied their captain, the fearful mind, and staggered down to drown themselves in dewy sweetness. She bathed, drank, stretched full-length on dewy grass to rest a while and listen to her friends the frogs and watch her friends the stars till — Lol! the stars were gone and the white-hot sun was hanging in the trees and the froggy chorus drowned in the poppoppopping of a fettlers' trolley. She just had time to hide.

Tocky loved frogs for their sparkling eyes and merry songs and friendly ways, but did not scruple eating them if need be. There was need that morning. Apologetically she slaughtered five and ate their delicate legs with dainty bamboo-shoots, concluding her meal with native gooseberries, a stick-load of sugar-bag honey drawn from a hollow tree, and crystal water.

She went her way. Just before noon

she was scared off the track by the returning trolley. In mid-afternoon she was scared again, when, coming out of a reedy swamp from hunting for roots and duck-eggs, she saw a bull-buffalo on the railway not twenty yards away. She fell on her face. The beast did not see her. He was looking eastward, with great head rearing, snuffling. So he stood for several minutes, while a swarm of flies buzzed around his scaly pig-like hide, and while marsh-flies and mosquitoes and leeches dealt with Tocky; then he left the road and wandered into the bush. Tocky did not move till she could stand the draining of her blood no longer.

On she went and on and on. Early next morning she came upon a gang of fettlers at work; or rather at rest, because they were squatting on their haunches among their tools, talking and smoking. Their voices in the windless golden air murmured like music; and their smoke rose high like incense.

At noon that day the mail-train passed on its way to the Melisande, passed in a cloud of dust and smoke, and passed in a moment, leaving Tocky with a little more understanding of distance and the slowness of her feet.

At midday on the fourth day she was delighted to see the familiar ruins of the Garrison suddenly appear as she rounded a pandanus thicket. She left the road at the little shed where he whom she still regarded as her father used to keep his tricycle, and walked up the clinker path towards the house. No talk of Norman's or Aintee's could ever convince her that

she was not an O'Cannon born. She thought of old Tim as she climbed the hill, and halfway up turned off to look at his grave. It was easy to find, being the one bare patch on the hillside. The fettlers who fashioned it had sterilized the site in railway-style with weed-poison. In fact they had made a railway job of it in every detail. The mound was gravelled and shelved at the edges; the fence was of forty-five pound rails; the cross at the head of it was a steel sleeper to which was bolted an iron plate in which some patient and bitter fellow had inscribed with a drill the epitaph:

TIM O'CANNON
FETTLER
BUCHERD BY TRAFFIC DEPT
XMAS DAY 1927
R. I. P.

Tocky's attention was suddenly drawn by the bray of a donkey. On the brow of the hill she saw two donkeys grazing, a white one and a roan, which she instantly recognised as Cho Sek Ching's inseparable Lidjin and Poltix. She did not know that Cho was the cause of her recent misery, nor much about that which he had caused Norman and Mark, but was well aware that he was one of the lowest old blackguards on the face of the earth, having lately heard Norman often say so. Therefore she did not go near the house, guessing that Cho was camped there, but, skirting it warily, made for the pack-track, and went on to Red Ochre.

West Australian Permit System

The following letter was sent to the Editor of The West Australian, Perth's chief daily paper, and was published by him in his paper's issue of 3rd June last. We now publish it at the request of a halfcaste Aboriginal residing in Perth:—

CARE OF NATIVES

Exemption Difficulties.

Sir.—The reply of the Acting-Chief Secretary (Mr. Gray) is lamentably weak to those who know the facts. The permit system, though it existed on paper for years, has not been applied to the area south of Geraldton to any extent. I know farmers who have employed natives for 10 years and have never had a permit and when last year informed that they must obtain a permit, have simply cut out the native labour. He is still further astray in the natives' ability to get exemption.

Under the Act the native had a measure of justice secured him by Parliament in that he could appeal to a Magistrate who could "make any order as in his opinion the justice of the case requires", and several cases were so decided in favour of the natives and against the Department of Native Affairs; but the proposed regulations considerably narrow his chances. The first of these refuses to allow a native of any colour to engage a legal practitioner to present his case, although it provides for the Commissioner to conduct the proceedings against him. The Commissioner is familiar with court proceedings and has on this question, at least, as much knowledge as any legal practitioner, whereas the native has probably never entered a court-house previously, would naturally be in a funk, and have no chance of effectively conducting a case on which his freedom depended.

The most cruel stranglehold the new regulations put on the natives' fight for freedom is No. 141—"No certificate will be issued in favour of any native who lives or associates with natives who are not exempted." This practically prevents the native getting to the Magistrate, as he must absolutely cut himself adrift from all his relations and friends before he can submit his case. Let white people put themselves in the natives' place and ask whether they would accept exemption from the Act on those terms. Our objective should be to exempt all who are capable of taking their place in the work of the community and to prepare those who are not so fitted as soon as possible. No. 142 reads: "Exemption will not be issued to a native living in conjugal rela-

tions with another native and not legally married." Why enforce as a condition of freedom a higher standard than we dare apply to ourselves? No. 143 declares that "a certificate of exemption may include wife or children under 14". On the other hand, it may not, and the Commissioner can at any time take away the children of a perfectly well-behaved father and mother. I could multiply the extra hardships these regulations impose, but I urge that at least no further disabilities than the Act be placed on the natives in regard to exemption. Are we not satisfied to leave this matter of primary justice to our Magistrates?

Without exemption natives cannot work unless their employers will get a permit, cannot marry the person of their choice, cannot have any security in retaining their children, and cannot obtain their free citizenship unless they renounce and desert all their kith and kin. Are not these four fundamental rights of a people born in their own country, under the British flag, educated in our schools, reading our newspapers and brought up for four generations within our cultural and social conditions, the denial of which constitutes the nearest thing to slavery in the British Empire? — Yours, etc.

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